

[SRP copy]

1984 Autumnal Equinox
Eldale Hall

DWP—

and so at 3:33 P.M. today the sun will march across the equator & day and night will everywhere be of equal length. Very exciting. It's virtually impossible for me not to think of Stonehenge and Carnac and other such ancient observatories on such momentous days. My Gertrude Raynor Watt 8-day travel clock seems all very modern by comparison, and, of course, it is. Today I will commemorate the arrival of autumn by playing the "autumn" section of The Four Seasons of Vivaldi, the complete Das Lied von der Erde, Strauss' Four Last Songs. I wish I had a church bell here. I would ring the bell wildly for about ten minutes beginning at the magic moment when autumn steps forward. At the end of the tape on which I placed (put Vivaldi's The Four Seasons I have Poulenc's Model Animals, which is now playing: 10:25 A.M. and I am sitting at the dining room table in intense morning sunlight. It's a chilly morning and the espresso that I have before me in an enamel cup is steaming beautifully in the cool morning air. The Poulenc music is so luxurious and sensual that it all seems very cooey. No windows are sparkling blue and white and when I look up at the sun-drenched windows it looks like the ^{sun-drenched} sun-covered water when looked at from below. Childhood memories and present realities are synthesizing rather more beautifully & maturely.

Two days ago, WSP said to me: "You know, there are some grapes out there." SRP: "Do you suppose there are enough that I could make some jelly?" Yesterday I picked the grapes -- not a very bountiful harvest as far as quantity goes, but extraordinarily bountiful on the emotional level. WSP gets very involved in my canning and pickling sessions and began to reemerge at high speed. No grape harvest this year yielded two quarts of mashed grapes (seeds, pulp, skins), which when processed became two pints

of grape jelly, plus a little left over. I will give two two pints² to WSP and to you, probably at Christmas. You will receive one pint for at least two reasons: (1) you gave WSP the grape vine, didn't you? -- WSP was quite sure that you did although he couldn't remember just when. If you are able to determine just when you gave WSP the vine that would be very useful information for the label that I will attach to the two pint jars prior to presentation; (2) you have (or appear to have) a grape jelly obsession/attachment. [Where would we be down our obsession/attachment? Still living in trees, in all probability.]

Autumn has arrived. What a wonderful moment. As it did, I was engaged in "gathering winter fuel." My life has become so "seasonal" since my withdrawal to the country, and it gives me so much pleasure, and I'm sure you are aware. On Saturday as autumn arrived, to be specific, the Buhermak Clan and I were engaged in cutting down many of the trees here at Eldale that block so much of the light from the west. John's father felled the trees and then he and John cut off the smaller branches. Richard then moved in with a 20-inch long aluminum measure and placed a white chalk mark every 20 inches all along the trunk: the 20-inch size is best for the Buhermak wood burner. Connie & Kathy & SRP hauled away the smaller branches and stacked the wood. Around noon we started a large fire on the Dunduff lawn and cooked hot dogs on sticks and sat on the lawn and drank coffee and soda and ate hot dogs & potato chips and some of WSP's tomatoes and cookies. The fire, after lunch, became a roaring conflagration and all of the scrap branches and all of the old outhouse wood that I had piled out back were